

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 01471 01 OF 02 081245Z

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO USIA WASHDC

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USIA FOR IEU; STATE FOR CU/EE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: RO, US

SUBJECT: COUNTRY PLAN

: BILATERAL COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIP

REF: USIA 6048; 4347; 3750

1. COMMUNICATION RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE GOR AND THE USA TEND TO FLUCTUATE BETWEEN RELATIVE OPENNESS AND RESTRICTIVE OBSTACLES. THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS ARE REFLECTIONS OF HOW THE ROMANIAN GOVERNMENT READS ITS OWN SELF-INTEREST, AND HOW IT PERCEIVES THE DIRECTION OF AMERICAN POLICY. THE PROSPECTIVE VISIT OF THE ROMANIAN HEAD OF STATE, OR THE ANNUAL DEBATE IN CONGRESS ON MFN REVENUE ARE CERTAIN TO EASE COMMUNICATIONS' ACCESS. A REVERSAL ON MFN, OR A SPATE OF ROMANIAN DEFECTIONS TO THE U.S. WILL ASSUREDLY BE FOLLOWED BY TIGHTENING OF CONTROLS OVER CONTACTS.

2. IN THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES THERE EXISTS AMONG MOST ROMANIANS A CLIMATE OF APPREHENSION AND RETICENCE WHEN IT COMES TO OVERT ASSOCIATION WITH EMBASSY-SPONSORED PROGRAMS. OFFICIALLY NOMINATED ROMANIAN GRANTEES WILL NOT ENTER THE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BUCAR 01471 01 OF 02 081245Z

EMBASSY FOR TESTS OF THEIR LANGUAGE COMPETENCE, PREFERRING INSTEAD THE SEMI-NEUTRAL GROUND OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY. AND EVEN ATTENDANCE AT THE AMERICAN LIBRARY IS VIEWED WITH SOME TREPIDATION IF IT IS NOTED THAT ONE'S PRESENCE THERE HAS BEEN OFTEN AND REPEATED.

3. EVEN PERIODS WHEN RELATIONS ARE EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND

COOPERATIVE, INVITATIONS TO USIS PROGRAMS ARE NOT ALWAYS DELIVERED, AND WHEN RECEIVED, ATTENDANCE IS UNCERTAIN. THE NEW DECREES STRENGTHENING THE POWERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR SOCIALIST CULTURE AND EDUCATION HAVE DECENTRALIZED THE CENSORSHIP APPARATUS, BUT HAVE IMPOSED A MORE PERVASIVE, AND LIMITING SYSTEM OF SELF-CENSORSHIP. OUR ABILITY TO REACH A WIDER AUDIENCE THROUGH THE STATE CONTROLLED MEDIA REMAINS MINIMAL. ROMANIAN MEDIA ONLY OCCASIONALLY PRESENT POSITIVE IMAGES OF THE U.S. EXCEPT IN THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGICAL FIELDS.

4. PRIVATE AND PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE
BE-

TWEEN ROMANIA AND THE U.S. IS GOVERNED BY THE FIVE-YEAR AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES IN THE CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL FIELDS SIGNED ON DECEMBER 13, 1974. PRESENTLY THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY TWENTY ROMANIAN SCHOLARS IN THE U.S. ON OFFICIAL USG PROGRAMS AND SOME FORTY MORE ON PRIVATE OR DIRECT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. THERE ARE FORTY-FIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARS IN ROMANIA ON OFFICIAL PROGRAMS AND SOME EIGHTY-SIX STUDENTS, MOSTLY IN MEDICINE, STUDYING PRIVATELY. ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL MATERIAL FOR AMERICAN RESEARCHERS IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IS DIFFICULT AND LIMITED. REQUESTS AT THE MID-TERM REVIEW TALKS ON THE PROGRAM OF COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES FOR MORE EMPHASIS ON LECTURERS IN

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PAGE 03 BUCAR 01471 01 OF 02 081245Z

FIELDS IN AMERICAN STUDIES WERE RECEIVED COLDLY BY THE ROMANIANS. THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY BECAUSE THE GOR PERCEIVES THE PRESENT COMMUNICATIONS RELATIONSHIP TO BE TOO ONE-SIDED IN FAVOR OF THE U.S. WHILE TWENTY-TWO AMERICAN BOOKS WERE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AND PUBLISHED IN ROMANIA LAST YEAR AND FIFTY-FOUR AMERICAN FILMS WERE PURCHASED BY THE GOR FOR BOTH DIRECT PROJECTION AND TELEVISION,, NO ROMANIAN BOOKS WERE TRANSLATED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. AND NO ROMANIAN FILMS WERE PURCHASED BY AMERICAN DISTRIBUTORS. ALTHOUGH THE GOR DOES NOT JAM FOREIGN BROADCASTS NOR ACTIVELY INTERFERE WITH WESTERN JOURNALISTS' ACCESS TO NEWS SOURCES, EXCEPT IN THE MOST SENSITIVE POLITICAL AREAS, IT CONSTANTLY COMPLAINS THAT ROMANIA CONSISTENTLY RECEIVES A HOSTILE PRESS IN THE U.S. AND THAT RADIO FREE EUROPE, AS OPPOSED TO VOA, INTERFERES IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY BY ITS HOSTILE COMMENTARY ON LOCAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. SINCE THE GOR CONTROLS ALL ROMANIAN MEDIA, IT CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE USG CAN'T EXERCISE MORE INFLUENCE ON THE AMERICAN MEDIA TO GIVE A MORE BALANCED VIEW OF ROMANIA INASMUCH AS POLITICAL WILL IS CLEARLY IN FAVOR OF INCREASED AND BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. THIS UNFAVORABLE BALANCE MAKES IMPROVED BILATERAL COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULT. ACCENTING THESE

"NORMAL" COMMUNICATION TENSIONS IS THE HIGHLY CENTRALIZED BUREAUCRACY THAT INHIBITS DECISION-MAKING AT THE WORKING LEVEL, AND COMPLICATES OPERATIONAL RELATIONSHIP.

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PAGE 01 BUCAR 01471 02 OF 02 081318Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 BUCHAREST 1471

USIA FOR IEU; STATE FOR CU/EE

5. DESPITE THESE NEGATIVE FACTORS, THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR A BROADER, MORE SUBSTANTIVE INTERFACE BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE U.S. HIGH-LEVEL VISITS BEGINNING WITH THE U.S. PRESIDENT'S VISIT IN 1969 HAVE PROVIDED THE FRAMEWORK AND ENCOURAGEMENT FOR A STEADILY EXPANDING AND DEEPENING PROCESS OF MUTUAL INTERACTION IN ALMOST EVERY FIELD AND AT ALMOST EVERY LEVEL. THE RESULT HAS BEEN A LEVEL AND QUALITY OF BILATERAL DISCOURSE PROBABLY UNPARALLELED ANYWHERE IN EASTERN EUROPE IN TERMS OF REGULAR ACCESS TO AND DIALOGUES WITH TOP POLICY MAKERS. A GROWING SEGMENT OF THE YOUNGER, EDUCATED POPULATION CAN COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH. AMERICAN EXCHANGE SCHOLARS, THE VOICE OF AMERICA, AMERICAN FILMS, TELEVISION, AGENCY PERIODICALS AND BOOKS, HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO A VITAL AWARENESS, IF NOT A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE UNITED STATES. THESE FACTORS, COUPLED WITH THE REGIME'S OBVIOUS DESIRE FOR FOREIGN POLICY INDEPENDENCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION HAS ACCENTED THE RECEPTIVITY THAT MANY ROMANIANS, PARTICULARLY INTELLECTUALS, HAVE SHOWN TOWARD ICA PROGRAM OUTPUT.

6. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT ALL OF OUR LONG AND SHORT-TERM COUNTRY OBJECTIVES ARE AFFORDED THE SAME RECEPTIVITY, AND THAT ANY PROGRAM WILL FIND AN APPROPRIATE AUDIENCE. ONCE AGAIN, PERCEIVED SELF-INTEREST, AND THE DEGREE OF SENSITIVITY
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BUCAR 01471 02 OF 02 081318Z

TO THE SUBJECT MATTER ARE CRUCIAL FACTORS IN DETERMINING WHAT WILL SAIL AND WHAT WILL SINK. PROGRAMS ON THE TRANSFER OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL KNOW-HOW ARE WELCOMED AND SUPPORTED.

7. THE ARTS IN GENERAL ARE FELT TO BE LESS THREATENING, AND THEREFORE, MORE ACCEPTABLE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ROMANIANS ARE NOT AS SANGUINE ABOUT PROGRAMS AND SCHOLARS IN AMERICAN HISTORY, ECONOMICS, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROCESSES, AND IN SOME ASPECTS OF FOREIGN POLICY, ESPECIALLY THE ISSUE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS IMPORTANT, THEREFORE, THAT WE AVOID THE NATURAL TENDENCY TO CATER TO THOSE SUBJECT FIELDS AND AUDIENCES WHICH OFFER THE LEAST RESISTENCE, PAYING ONLY PASSING OBESIENCE TO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY AND CONCERN.

8. INSTITUTIONAL DOORS ARE NOT COMPLETELY CLOSED TO TOPICS OF CONTROVERSY WHEN THE AMERICAN POINT OF VIEW IS PRESENTED BY A SCHOLAR OF EMINENCE AND RENOWN. LITTLE KNOWN LECTURERS, CAPABLE AS THEY MAY BE, WILL REACH AUDIENCES AND MAKE AN IMPACT IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE SIZE OF THEIR INTERNATIONAL REPUTATIONS. AN ALVIN TOFFLER OR PIERRE SALINGER ARE STILL REMEMBERED HERE, WHILE MANY LESSER LIGHTS HAVE COME AND GONE, LEAVING HARDLY A RIPPLE.

9. THERE ARE ALSO SPECIFIC ISSUES OF FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMICS ON WHICH CAN BE FOUND A MUTUALITY OF INTEREST, IF NOT A SIMILARITY OF POSITION. THESE TOPICS, SUCH AS DIS-ARMAMENT, AND A NEW ECONOMIC ORDER FOR THE THIRD WORLD CAN BE USED AS ENTREES INTO BROADER DISCUSSIONS AND CONTACTS IN RELATED FIELD.

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